

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 04433 081852Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SSO-00 /016 W
-----081854Z 119289 /41

O 081813Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 596

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4433

FOR UNDER SECRETARY BENSON ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SP, OVIP (BENSON, LUCY WILSON)
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT BY UNDER SECRETARY BENSON

REF: STATE 131427

1. I WAS DELIGHTED TO LEARN OF YOUR PROPOSAL TO
VISIT MADRID, A POSSIBILITY WE HAD DISCUSSED WHEN
I HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING YOU IN MARCH.

2. I APPRECIATE YOUR REQUEST FOR MY CANDID ADVICE
ON SUCH A VISIT AT THIS TIME. AS YOU KNOW, THE
FIRST PARLAMENTARY ELECTIONS ARE TAKING PLACE ON
JUNE 15 AND I AM NOT AT ALL SURE HOW LONG IT WILL BE
AFTER THE ELECTIONS BEFORE A NEW GOVERNMENT, BOTH OF
THE CABINET AND SUB-CABINET LEVELS, WILL ASSUME OFFICE.
EVEN ASSUMING THAT MOST OF THE KEY SENIOR OFFICIALS
WOULD HAVE BEEN NAMED BY JULY 1, WE CAN NOT EXPECT
THEM TO BE WELL READ INTO THEIR JOBS AND IT WOULD
SEEM TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR YOU TO
CALL ON THE SPANIARDS AT BOTH THE CABINET AND SUB-CABINET
LEVEL.

3. THERE IS NO STRUCTURE IN SPAIN FOR HANDLING SECURITY
ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY SALES MATTERS COMPARABLE TO OURS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 04433 081852Z

ONE KEY OFFICIAL IN THE SPANISH SYSTEM INVOLVED IN SUCH
MATTERS IS THE CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF. HOWEVER,
WITH THE DEATH OF THE PREVIOUS INCUMBENT THAT POSITION
HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE THE LATTER PART OF APRIL AND WILL
NOT BE FILLED UNTIL SOME UNSPECIFIED TIME FOLLOWING THE
ELECTIONS WHEN A NEW GOVERNMENT IS IN OFFICE. QUITE
FRANKLY, THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF IS

NOT A PERSON YOU WOULD FIND PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO WALK WITH.

4. I UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE YOUR DESIRE TO HAVE A LOW VISIBILITY VISIT. HOWEVER I AM NOT SURE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THIS SINCE U.S. POLICY ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE IS A MATTER OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND ONE WHICH CONTINUES TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IN THE SPANISH MEDIA. THUS YOUR MEETINGS WITH SPANISH OFFICIALS WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME "NEWS."

5. I WOULD ALSO ADD THAT THE QUESTION ABOUT "WHAT" YOU COULD APPROPRIATELY VISIT DURING SUCH A STAY IS SOMEWHAT COMPLEX SINCE MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT PROVIDED UNDER THE PREVIOUS MAP PROGRAM IS SOMEWHAT DISPERSED AMONGST SPANISH MILITARY UNITS. AS FAR AS I KNOW THE SPANISH DO NOT YET PHYSICALLY HAVE IN PLACE ANYTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE 1976 TREATY.

6. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, YOU MIGHT FIND IT A MORE PROFITABLE USE OF YOUR OWN TIME TO PLAN A VISIT TO MADRID AT A LATER DATE WHEN AT LEAST WE HAVE A GOVERNMENT IN PLACE. HOWEVER, SHOULD YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A VISIT AT THIS TIME TO MADRID, YOU WILL OF COURSE BE MOST WELCOME AND WE WOULD PROVIDE YOU WITH THE FULLEST POSSIBLE BRIEFING WITHIN THE MISSION ON FRIDAY, JULY 1. WE WOULD ALSO ENDEAVOR TO MAKE WHATEVER OUTSIDE APPOINTMENTS WE COULD WHICH MIGHT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 04433 081852Z

SEEM PROFITABLE. I WOULD ONLY ADD THAT OBTAINING SATURDAY APPOINTMENTS WITH SUCH SENIOR SPANISH OFFICIALS AS MAY BE AVAILABLE IS NOT ALWAYS EASY.

7. IF NOT NOW, THEN LATER, I DO STRONGLY HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT SPAIN AND YOU CAN BE SURE THAT WE WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE VISIT USEFUL.

8. WARMEST REGARDS. STABLER

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